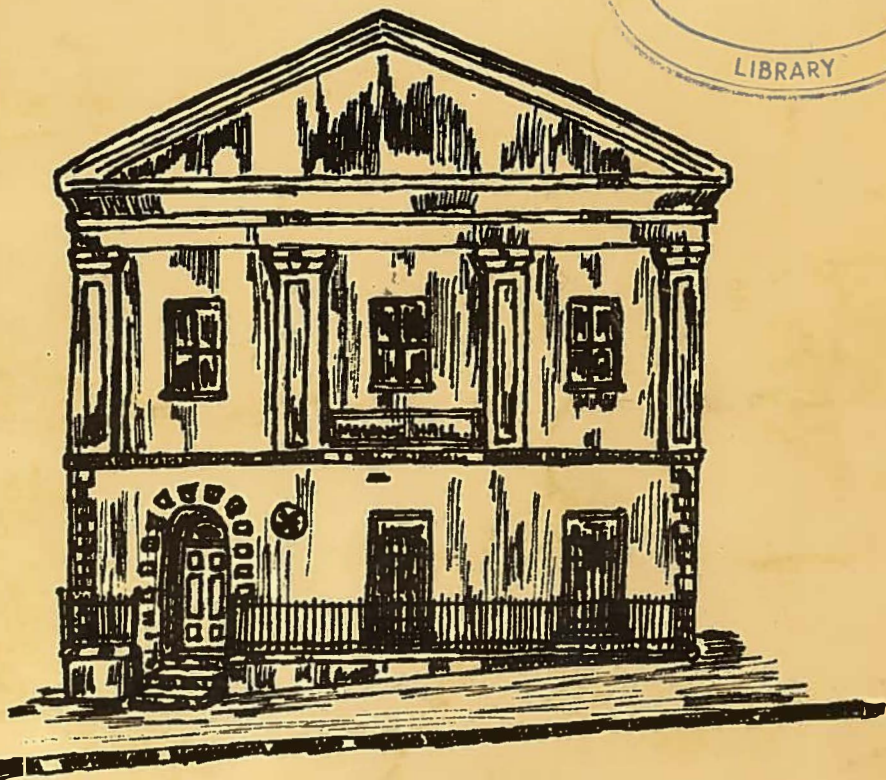


Title	Bandon in the eighteenth century. The view from a terrier and a survey
Authors	O'Flanagan, Patrick
Publication date	1989
Original Citation	O'Flanagan, P. (1989) 'Bandon in the eighteenth century. The view from a terrier and a survey', Bandon Historical Journal 5, pp. 48-57.
Type of publication	Article (peer-reviewed)
Link to publisher's version	<a href="http://homepage.eircom.net/~cumannseanchais/">http://homepage.eircom.net/~cumannseanchais/</a>
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Download date	2023-05-05 21:08:31
Item downloaded from	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10468/4706">http://hdl.handle.net/10468/4706</a>

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# BANDON HISTORICAL JOURNAL

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NO 5

1989

# BANDON IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

## The View From A Terrier and a Survey

Patrick O'Flanagan

It is now clear that the main morphological elements of many of the Irish settlements which merit the appellation town had been acquired before the beginning of the eighteenth century (Horner, 1979; O'Connor, 1987). In this, Bandon as a plantation foundation, was no exception. Recent studies of several towns show that they were economically and socially complex units whose vitality depended upon their capacity to animate what had become their hinterlands. Many towns also grew startlingly during the eighteenth century as measured by their capacity to obtain new economic functions and simultaneously expand preexisting ones. These changes were reflected in the improvement of public buildings and infrastructures such as streets, bridges and, not least by, dramatic increases in population mirrored by the presence of many new houses and even new suburbs.

Towns which were in the possession of one land magnate were often managed by agents who administered them through the medium of rent-rolls, ledgers and account books. These documents were often exclusively concerned with recording the financial transactions of the head-tenants with the landlords. In many instances the magnates contracted land-surveyors to produce maps of their urban properties. These detailed surveys, besides indicating domestic residences, depict many of the leading man made or modified features of a settlement. These were often accompanied by terriers which furnish comprehensive details on the dimensions of residences as well as often supplying a thorough listing of head-tenants and all their under-tenants. By themselves, or together with survey maps, terriers yield the researcher with crucial information in any attempt to reconstruct the past geography of place.

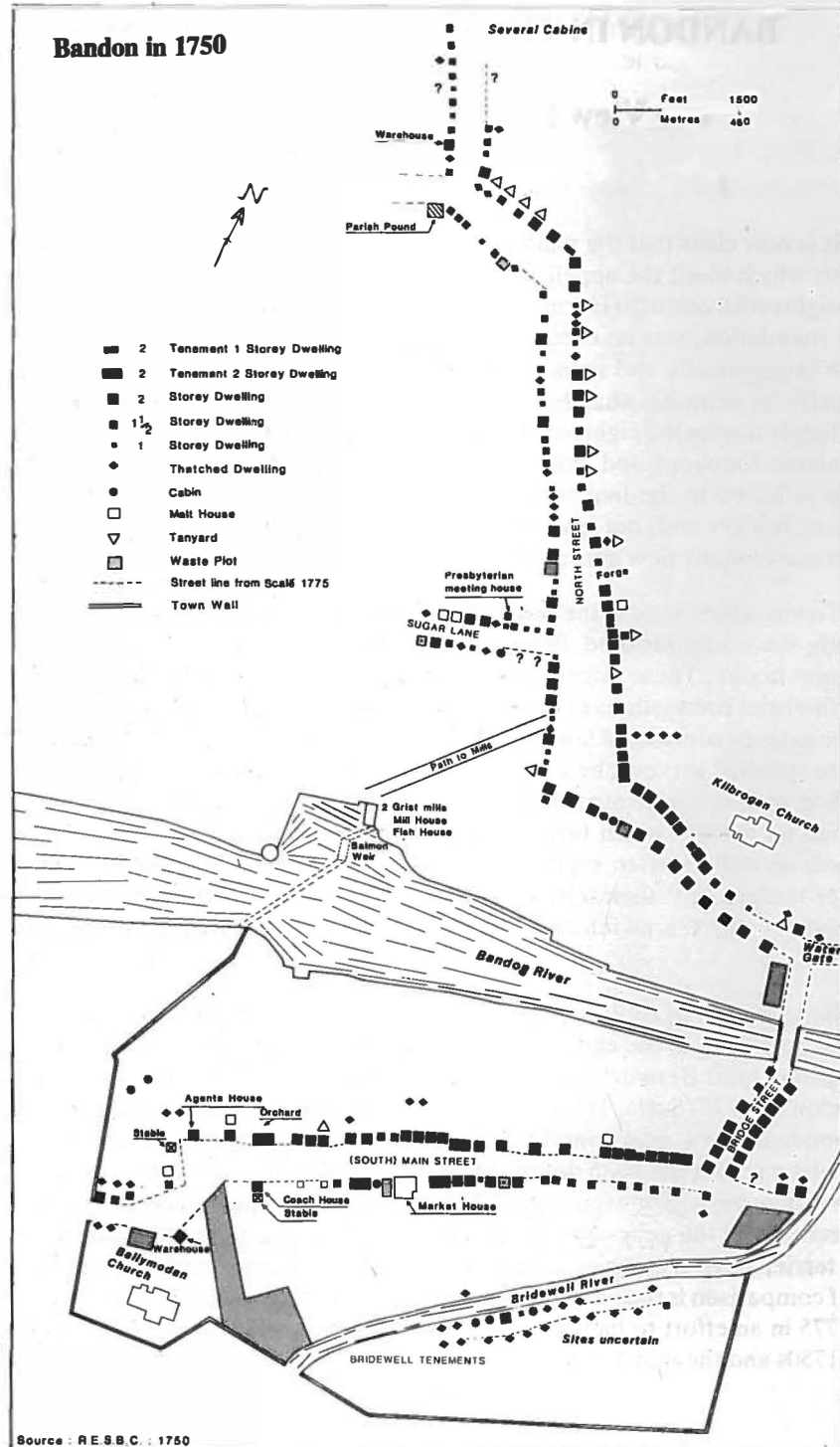
Bandon with its copious and detailed manuscript sources extending from its plantation beginning to the end of its estate tradition in 1897, strangely lacks an accurate early map until Bernard Scalé completed his survey of 'The Town and Gardens of Bandon' in 1775 (Scalé, 1775). These are ambiguous references in earlier agents' correspondence to a map completed in the late 1600s, probably the 1690s and more recently a terrier has been discovered dating to the early 1750s whose accompanying map is now mislaid or even lost (R.E.S.B., 1750). Our purpose is simply to attempt to reconstruct the geography of the town by producing a tentative map based upon the terrier paying especial attention to housing, industry, services and society. A brief comparison is then made between the 1750 terrier and Scalé's survey and terrier of 1775 in an effort to indicate the nature, direction and degree of change between the 1750s and the mid-1770s.



Ordnance Survey photograph of Bandon, 1902, King Edward VII's Coronation.

(Courtesy: Ordnance Survey)

## Bandon in 1750



Richard Cox's well known description of Bandon paints a word picture of houses set in well planted gardens 'in summer time this town seems to be built in a wood' (Day, 1902). Scalé's magnificent map of 1775 confirms this idyllic impression and the 1750 terrier also supports such a view of a well ordered and well maintained settlement. The eighteenth century rentals for Bandon purvey an incomplete picture of the settlement as they only provide the names of the head-tenants and the leading under-tenants. By contrast, the 1750 terrier (R.E.S.B.) yields a much more detailed and complex picture of the elements that concern us. To begin with all the head-tenants — but only a minute number of under-tenants — are named, which allows it to be compared with contemporary rentals and dated confidently to the early 1750s (L.P., 1750). Each property is then quantitatively assessed in terms of its depth and breadth. Properties are denominated either as tenements — which might consist of one or more dwellings. Dwelling houses too, are sometimes divided into tenements, presumably occupied by distinct individuals or families. Properties are also referred to as messuages, holdings, houses and more rarely, there are waste plots on the street front.

The houses are described in a crude hierarchy with slate roofed two storied houses at the top of the league, followed respectively by one and a half and single storied slated roofed houses. Thatched dwellings are always invariably of one storey and at the heel of the hunt, are cabins. Returns, toilets, backyards, outhouses, coach-houses, stables, backsides and gardens, as well as orchards, are also carefully enumerated. Public buildings are also indicated as are all those with non-domestic functions, such as, malt-houses, tanneries and warehouses. Major landmarks such as the town wall, the sites of the former gate-houses and a rampiere, are all indicated as locations. The main physical items mentioned are the rivers Bandon and Bridewell.

The R.E.S.B. terrier divides the town into a number of sections. To begin with it enumerates 'the lands of Coolfadda and Jeffords 18 acres', to the north of the town which encompassed modern Knockbrogan townland and an indeterminate area outside it. Another section deals with North Street (East and West) and Sugar Lane. The final section deals with South Main Street and the Bridewell tenements 'which were bounded by the Bridewell river and the Town Wall'. Bridge Street and Castle Street though depicted, are not named as separate entities. Barrett's Hill (Convent Hill) is covered as part of North Street as far as the 'Parish Pound', but several houses and cabins were located to the west of this. No dwellings save two were located east of the Watergate. Castle Road (O'Mahony Avenue) and Gallows Hill Street (Chapel Street) to the west of Bandon formed part of the Bernard Estate focussed on Castlebernard and the Shannon Street/Irish Town area then belonged to the larger, more fragmented Shannon Estate with its focus at Castlemartyr in east Co. Cork, were excluded from both surveys.

By comparison we might expect the Scalé terrier and its accompanying plan to be more straightforward: regrettably it is not. It is highly informative in as much as it provides an overview of all denominations (through listing all the head-tenants and their under-tenants) organised under the heading of tenements, messuages and



houses. It also enumerates all non-domestic facilities ranging from churches to warehouses. Houses are classified distinctly by Scalé, thus rendering an exact comparison with R.E.S.B. unattainable. Houses are enumerated by Scalé as follows: large (slate) houses are at the top of his list followed by houses and then there are small (slate) houses and finally cabins. Backhouses, offices (whose functions are not made explicit), stables and coach-houses are also listed. No information is furnished in relation to the number of stories per house and returns are not mentioned. Scalé's plan also has its own problems, in as much as it is impossible to identify backhouses, coach-houses and other facilities attached to domestic dwellings, though gardens, orchards and meadows, can easily be pinpointed. On the 1750 terrier and on Scalé's plan, most of the streets are named.

Despite their eccentricities, it is possible to explore both terriers in an effort to identify change in the structure of the town between c. 1750 and 1775. In c. 1750 Bandon was a substantial and vibrant urban settlement which unreservedly merited the designation town on account of its population size, range of functions, complexity of its ethnic and social structure and, not least, by an impressive ensemble of large domestic houses. South and North Main Streets were then the leading residential ones, boasting of the largest number of what were then described as large (slate) houses or simply (slate) houses (Table, 1). Apart from Bridge Street and Castle Street, cabins were found on every street within the town though in much larger numbers on the streets on the furthest outskirts of the settlement. Figure 1 indicates in a generalised way, the incidence and categorisation of residential properties, industries, services and public buildings in the early 1750s. This map must be interpreted with caution and also with the following qualifications.

First of all the street lines and the line of the defensive wall have been transcribed from Scalé. The dimensions of the Bandon and Bridewell rivers have also been drawn down from Scalé. The site of the old bridge leading from Bridge Street to North Main Street is indicated as it was in the c. 1750s.

The house locations and their ordering on the main street fronts follow the terrier, but it is not clear how many were detached and their exact sites must remain speculative. At the edge of the built-up area, for example, on Kilbrogan Street, Sugar Lane (Allen Square), Barrett's Hill (Convent Road) and south of the Bridewell river (Bridewell tenements) house locations and ordering are unclear, and they are represented impressionistically on Figure 1. The terrier refers to the presence of more cabins on Barrett's Hill and Kilbrogan Street but it is unlikely that in total, their number exceeded a dozen. Furthermore, the sites of the remaining dwellings, industries and services located behind houses on the street fronts are approximate. The terrier does specify their presence, however, behind named houses. In this regard, it is impossible to accurately depict the location of tenement boundaries between the denominated properties.

In the 1750s North Main Street was by far the largest continuous and most populous street. It could boast of the largest house in Bandon (2½ stories). Like in South

TABLE 1

	Large Houses/ Houses/Small Houses	Thatched Cabin/House	Total	Head Tenants	Under Tenants	Backside	Stable	Returns	Malt Houses	Tanyard	Office	Garden	Orchard	Waste
South Main Street (South)	1750 22 1775 34 (5 Small)	- 1	6 28 - 36	NA 16	NA 40	1 1	2 8	16 NA	- -	- -	NA 13	16 22	- -	4 -
South Main Street (North)	1750 34 1775 41 (7 Small)	4 0	2 40 0 41	NA 29	NA 40	16 -	1 6	22 NA	2 1	1 1	NA 13	15 18	2 1	NA 1
Bridewell Lane	1750 NA 1775 2	NA NA	NA NA	NA 1	NA 2	NA NA	NA NA	NA NA	NA NA	NA NA	NA NA	NA NA	NA NA	NA NA
Bridewell Street (St. Pat.'s Quay)	1750 2 1775 4	11 39	16 -	27 39	1 2	NA 42	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	10 34	2 -	- -
Bridge Street	1750 12 1775 14	- -	- 12 - 14	NA 14	NA 13	4 NA	0 2	5 NA	- -	- -	NA 4	6 3	- -	- -
Castle Street	1750 3 1775 5	- -	- 2 - 5	NA 10	NA 5	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
North Street (East)	1750 54 1775 66 (23 Small)	0 0	15 -	69 66	NA 37	NA 56	14 NA	NA 10	2 1	14 3	NA 10	23 29	4 3	5 9
North Street (West)	1750 37 1775 49	2 -	3 42 - 49	NA 26	NA 57	14 NA	2 12	12 NA	1 -	- -	NA 6	23 23	5 6	4 0
Sugar Lane	1750 14 1775 14	4 4	4 28 0 57	NA 14	NA 49	- NA	NA 7	- -	1 1	- -	- -	20 28	2 7	1 2
Kilbrogan Lane	1750 12 1775 12	10? 16	3 -	25 28	NA 22	NA NA	- 1	- NA	1 -	2 2	- -	3 4	2 6	1 1
Barrett's Hill	1750 0 1775 4	15? 56	- -	15 66	NA 43	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	1 6

1750 c. 285  
1775 c. 416

**TABLE 2****Slate Houses (Stories 2) 1750**

	<b>2 Stories</b>	<b>1½ Stories</b>	<b>1 Storey</b>
<b>South Main Street (South)</b>	12	13	1
<b>South Main Street (North)</b>	34	7	1
<b>North Main Street (East)</b>	25	14	21
<b>North Main Street (West)</b>	21	10	6

**1775**

	<b>Large House</b>	<b>House</b>	<b>Small (Slate) House</b>
<b>South Main Street (South)</b>	4	26	5
<b>South Main Street (North)</b>	6	41	7
<b>North Main Street (East)</b>	7	36	23
<b>North Main Street (West)</b>	2	46	1

Source: R.E.S.B. 1750 and Scalé, 1775

Main Street, the inflated number of returns might indicate the presence of a substantial lodger population. More than any other attribute, the incidence of fourteen tanyards and three malt houses endowed the street with the character of a mixed residential and industrial suburb. Signs of opulence and embellishment were scarce here: there were few coach houses, stables or gardens. But most of the street frontage was occupied by domestic residences. Wasteplots were less frequent here than in South Main Street and the incidence of a substantial number of comfortable domestic residences is a testament to its workaday character.

South Main Street appeared to lack the same level of urban coherence: there were more 'gaps' in the street line, waste plots were more common and there was a significant number of smaller 1½ storied dwellings. There were fewer manufacturing entities: there was just one tanyard, a warehouse and three malthouses. The more residential character of this street was emphasised by the presence of two stables, a coach house and orchard and several gardens. Evidence of ongoing change here is provided by the fact that some of the houses are described as 'new' in the terrier.

Elsewhere housing was more prefunctory. The Bridewell tenements were composed of a collection of thatched dwellings and cabins: there was only one substantial house. Sugar Lane and Kilbrogan Street were short streets, though both possessed a good housing stock and some manufacturing facilities.

Pictorial confirmation of Bandon's progress between 1750 and 1775 is confirmed by both the map and terrier executed by Bernard Scalé (O'Flanagan, 'Bandon' 1988). A comparison of RESB with Scalé's terrier demonstrates that the town did experience considerable growth which is dramatically instanced in the increase in the town's population by at least a third in the space of 25 years. Admittedly, most of the growth occurred amongst the poorer sections of society, but there are many indications of a specific growth of prosperity amongst the wealthier sections of society which is especially reflected in a substantial increase in the number of large houses (Table 2). But there is evidence of a widening polarity emerging between them and the poorer and weaker elements within the town. This was a division which was reinforced by ethnic and religious distinctions (O'Flanagan, 1988).

Evidence of progress is provided by many indications which include a continuous improvement in housing stock, particularly in both North and South Main Streets where many of the cabins and thatched houses were replaced by more solid slate houses or they were demolished to make way for planned and more spacious gardens and/or orchards (Table 2). Most of the gaps on these streets were also filled in and there was a continuous housing line. This kind of transformation was most marked on the eastern side of North Main Street. The general increase in the number of gardens, especially north of the river Bandon is another testament to the increased prosperity enjoyed by certain sections of society. It was probably made possible by the decline of the tanning industry. The growth in the number of stables and coach houses also points to increased affluence. Still, Bandon's housing stock within the former walled area was dominated by medium sized housing in 1775: "large houses"

were exceptional and several of them were described as new (Table 2).

By 1775, South Main Street was a leading residential street, apart from a cooper-yard, one malt house, one warehouse and the Devonshire Arms Hotel, all of the buildings simply discharged the functions of dwellings. By comparison, the tanning and malting industry only retained a vestigial foothold on North Main Street in the form of several tanyards and malthouses. It is evident that the number of retail establishments, notably shops, is massively underestimated by both terriers: none are identified in 1750 and only two are specified in 1775.

Other indications of growth are manifested in the general decline of waste plots and ruined houses or cabins within the urban fabric. The rebuilding and relocation of the town's main bridge due to flood damage, the refurbishment of the two market houses and the building of an unlocated shambles was also a testament to this. On St. Patrick's Quay (then Bridewell Quay) the number of cabins trebled and these are depicted by Scalé as a ragged line of small dwellings on both sides of the street. Sugar Lane, Barrett's Hill and Kilbrogan Street had by 1775, blossomed into full blown streets which were overwhelmingly populated by people with surnames of Gaelic origin who invariably resided in cabins. However, closer to the urban core, a number of substantial houses have appeared on these streets and on Allen Square some orchards and gardens belonged to several of the cabins. This whole ensemble was reported upon unfavourably later on in the eighteenth century by the then agent of the Duke of Devonshire (Barry, 1960).

There was a dramatic decline in the number of industrial facilities, notably tanyards in North Main Street between 1750 and 1775. This transformation defies explanation though an improvement in the housing stock in this area may have been facilitated by their demise. While it is also yet not possible to pinpoint in time the growth of tanning along Watergate Street and Chapel Road, it is probable that the more copious water resources of the Bridewell and Bandon rivers helped to attract it to these locations. Several large tanyards were well established on these streets before the early 1840s.

Finally, by 1775 the town's population in the survey area had increased at least by a third to over 4000 people and most of this increase had occurred on the western and northern sectors of the town on Barrett's Hill, Kilbrogan Street and Allen Square and also presumably, along Castle Road and Shannon Street. The bulk of this growth must have been due to in-migration as few Gaelic sub-tenants are recorded as living within the walls, even in c. 1750.

Two dimensions of change are clearly evident from this analysis: increasing prosperity within the core of the town, witnessed by improvements in the housing stock and a dramatic growth of inferior dwellings on the outskirts of the settlement. This polarisation in terms of residence was matched by ethnic distinctions as the core area of Bandon was almost exclusively Protestant and the outskirts, exclusively Gaelic and presumably Catholic.

Even by 1750, Bandon was a substantial town by Irish standards, with a significant industrial sector represented in the town's fabric by numerous tanyards which must have depended upon prosperous pastoral farming. Milling, malting and brewing functions indicated a presence also of a strong cereal based agriculture. Textile production too significant, though its impact on the fabric of the settlement was passive. Contemporary accounts indicated that many of the weavers lived in South Main Street. The growth in the town's prosperity and population between c. 1750 and 1775 must surely betoken, at least consolidation if not an expansion in all of its functions.

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